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John Muir Newsletter, March/April 1981

Holt-Atherton Pacific Center for Western Studies

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JOHN MUIR NEWSLETTER



Holt-Atherton Pacific Center
for Western Studies

University of the Pacific
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PROJECT FUNDING IN JEOPARDY

On February 24, the Muir Project staff received a letter from Frank G. Burke, NHPRC (National Historical Publications and Records Commission) Executive Director, alerting all Grant Recipients that the Reagan Administration's budget recommendation to Congress eliminates all NHPRC grant funding after September 30, 1981. Congressional action on this recommendation is still pending, but Director Burke warns project directors to "begin planning for the cessation of federal funding, and, if necessary, for the longterm, safe storage of project materials."

The Muir Project is only one of dozens that will be adversely affected if this proposed cutback is sustained. Since it was first organized and staffed in the 1950's, NHPRC has provided a vital service for thousands of Americans who use historical records. Without NHPRC assistance the papers of Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, George Washington, Daniel Webster and many other American national leaders would not be widely available for research, study and appreciation. To cut off further appropriations after funding for the first year of a three-year project, as in the case of the Muir Microform Project, is truly penny wise and pound foolish.

As a counter proposal to offset the disastrous effects of this sweeping cutback and still demonstrate reasonable fiscal restraint, the Association for Documentary Editing recommends that project supporters urge their Congressional representatives to hold the line at a 25% cutback in NHPRC funding for the Fiscal Year 1982. This would slice \$ 1 million off NHPRC's current budget (which has not changed since 1975) and severely limit future operations, but would still not force a complete shutdown of worthy projects.

If you think the Muir Project and the NHPRC are worth saving, let your Congressional delegation know as soon as possible. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Muir Project office at UOP if you need the names of key committee members responsible for the NHPRC budget review.

THE JOHN MUIR PAPERS MICROFORM PROJECT: PROGRESS REPORT

Phase One of this project--the search and collection stage--has been quite successful. Since beginning this phase, in early January, 120 inquiry letters and news releases have been distributed and response has been very favorable. Institutions holding original Muir materials produce xerox copies of their collections and then loan them to be used for the duration of the project. When the project has been completed and the microform edition published, the xerox copies will then be returned to the lending institutions involved. Although the copies are on loan, a service fee is charged to cover the cost of reproduction and mailing.

Thus far we have received Muir materials from twenty institutions across the country, amounting to some 327 letters, four manuscripts, and several sketches. Contributing institutions include: the Huntington Library (146 letters and three manuscripts), Harvard University (105 letters), and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (69 letters, typescript copies of letters, and various sketches of Muir's inventions). We are currently awaiting material from the Bancroft Library and Yosemite National Park, both of which have extensive collections of Muir's papers.

Currently the project staff is working with the Muir correspondence, 1858-1914. We are in the process of integrating, in chronological order, the letters sent and the letters received; also, with the aid of project consultant William F. Kimes, we are attempting to date undated correspondence and then to integrate it into proper sequence.

The next area of the Muir Papers to be organized and arranged will involve the journals, of which there are 52, contained within six boxes amounting to 4 linear feet.

We are still in the first stage, collection of Muiriana, and would appreciate any information you may have concerning locations of or leads to original Muir materials.

MUIR SCHOLARS FACE PUBLICATION DELAYS

Since 1971 dozens of scholars have had access to the Muir Papers at the University of the Pacific for research purposes. Many research projects have resulted in the development of monographs and articles for publication, and in most cases the Muir heirs have granted permission to publish excerpts from the collection on a one-time basis. However, due to the increasing number of publication requests, coupled with the desire of the Muir heirs to protect their literary rights through statutory copyright, the Muir representatives have decided not to approve any new publication requests until the copyright status of the Muir Papers is clarified. This will not affect scholars who wish to consult the Muir Papers for research purposes, nor will it limit publication under the doctrine of fair scholarly use, but publication delays should be expected if material now protected under common law copyright is involved.

NEWSLETTER LOGO

We would like to thank those of you who contributed your ideas and art work to the design of a masthead and logo for this publication. The design which has been chosen, and appears on this issue, is the creation of Stan Hutchinson, a graphic designer from Sierra Madre. Many thanks to Mr. Hutchinson for this handsome contribution.

MUIR PHOTOGRAPHS

The staff has received several responses to our "Call for advice" concerning the collecting and integrating of Muir and Muir related photographs. The general feeling seems to be that the photographic section of the microform edition should be fairly extensive, including not only photos of Muir, his family and friends, and photos he collected, but also photos taken by contemporaries of locations visited by Muir. The photographic section of the project is one which needs careful thought and planning, and your ideas have been very helpful.

We are currently facing a possible reduction in project funding. As a result priorities must be set for the development and organization of a photographic section. In the event that project funds are severely limited the question of whether or not to even include a photographic section will have to be faced. Because of these factors we would appreciate your continued advice and ideas in reference to this area of the project.

PACIFIC HISTORIAN FEATURES MUIR

The Holt-Atherton Pacific Center's quarterly journal, The Pacific Historian, will be featuring an outstanding collection of articles focusing on John Muir in its summer issue. This edition will include contributions from a number of participants in last November's conference on the naturalist held here at UOP. Due out in June, it is hoped that this issue will also be made available in book form. Don't miss it.